

Camden Guide

LONDON CHALK FARM ROUNDHOUSE ALL NEXT WEEK



SUNDAY

OPENING NIGHT of the seven-day Camden Festival gets off to a roaring start with Wishbone Ash, one of the most exciting live bands in the country, and Cheech 'n' Chong, American freaks' answer to Morecambe and Wise.

Plus three of our best upcoming talents: the exquisite Linda Lewis, ex-Yes Pete Banks' band Flash and the excellent Hookfoot featuring Caleb Quaye.

Wishbone, now interlacing numbers off their excellent new album "Argus" with old favourites like "Jailbait" and "Phoenix," should win them-

selves a lot of friends on this gig. Always a storming and inventive band.

The American comedy duo, Cheech 'n' Chong, owe much of their ZAP comic humour to an amalgam of Lenny Bruce and Lord Buckley, updated by some dope-orientated cracks of their own.

Dunks have been a cliché pun with straight

comedians for years. The Chinese/Chicano (Mexican-American) pair update the gag with such stalwarts as "Laid-back Lenny" and the inevitable Red Freak. You laugh — but at yourself.

They're amazingly funny; and they've a few home truths about Alternative Culture to contribute.

MONDAY

FAMILY, one of our most famous "unknown" groups, continue to prove their inner vitality by simply staying around. No mean achievement in a period which has been lean — creatively and financially — for everybody.

The inclusion of John "Ken" Wetton, nominally on bass but also in a dual-lead capacity with Charlie Whitney, has strengthened the group — as "Fearless" showed — and they get together better than ever before.

They may also show new material. Heavy recordings are currently going on the tracks from the forthcoming album should have been worked in. But, even so, the group is unlikely to be much changed. Family's music varies within itself but directions remain basically steady, presenting the shivery voice of Roger Chapman against an instrumental backdrop emphasising almost-startling modal changes and isolated bursts of rather manic musicianship.

Support acts: SAM APPLE PIE/ BYZANTIUM.



TUESDAY



FAIRPORT and Quiver on the same bill should produce an evening of exacting acoustic and soft electric rock music; Fairport, with their roots firmly embedded in English traditional material, and Quiver, with leanings to the American scene.

Quiver, in point of fact, have progressed at a rate that seemed unlikely after early performances when the line-up appeared to change gig to gig.

More recently they have settled down and produced some absorbing music.

Fairport will be a musical contrast to Quiver. And certainly now have a reputation as one of the finest folk-rock bands in the country.

They, too, change all the time of course. Simon Nicol and drummer Dave Mattacks have gone. And in their places: Roger Hill and Tom Farnell.

I should think the recognisable sound of Fairport will have changed little. Mainly because it is Dave Swarbrick, on fiddle or through-the-nose vocals, who gives them a lot of their attraction.

Supported by: JONATHAN KELLY

WEDNESDAY

DR. JOHN The Night Tripper (alias Mac Rebennack) started his career at the age of 13 as an A & R man for Ace Records, one of the foremost R & B/pop labels recording the music of New Orleans.

Surrounded, engrossed and so much a part of the music of New Orleans through his formative years, Dr. John wasn't to appreciate just how much he'd been affected by his environment until he left for LA.

There he met up with his now producer and manager Harold Battiste, himself from New Orleans, and Dr. John — there really was a voodoo man of that name in the Louisiana swamps — came into being.

On this trip, he's carrying a full band including brass, girl singers and percussionist Jai Johanny Johanson from the Allman Brothers.

For those of you only mildly interested in the man because he wrote "Walk On Gilded Splinters," we highly recommend catching the cajun vocal-ist/songwriter/musician. He really is unique.

In support: BRINSLEY SCHWARZ /STACKRIDGE.



THURSDAY (MAY 4)



GALLAGHER at Camden? Should be a nice one. Genuine musical events rather than hyped record sales are what interest this most talented of Irishmen and Camden, where he appears with the superb Vinegar Joe, should give him room to expand in a live capacity.

Live performances are what Gallagher is all about. Taste, his previous outfit, was an essentially live act. For reasons of his own, he broke away over a year ago to pursue a solo career as showman/guitarist.

Trademarks are bluesy singing and superlative leadwork on some of the most decrepit gear around. And he breaks the rules in other ways: he gives vast value for money and is still one of the few British acts to play gigs in Northern Ireland (no records about Ulster, you'll notice — he just went and played there).

Enormous success seems to have eluded him, put perhaps that's not what he really wants. And the lack of it hasn't harmed his playing any.

Support acts: VINEGAR JOE/SMITH PERKINS & SMITH.

FRIDAY (5)

DONOVAN is gradually easing back himself into gigs again after a substantial lay-off. After an American tour just over a year ago, which on some reports wasn't entirely successful, he's been living in Ireland keeping fairly quiet.

In fact, it was in Ireland he met the musicians that make up the band which will be backing him at the Camden Festival. Previously they were all playing in Irish rock or country and western groups and the results apparently make for more of a country and western influence in Donovan's music that has existed before.

Line-up is John Ryan (piano), Stuart Lawrence (drums), Pete Cummings (guitar) and Philip Donnelly (guitar).

Also on the bill: The Sutherland Brothers Band featuring Iain and Gavin Sutherland plus drummer Neil Hopwood.

Unfortunately their album released on Island and produced by Muff Winwood seems to have been slightly neglected of late. A pity because it's a worthy album, full of natural, intelligent songs like their recent single "The Pie".

In support: DUNCAN BROWNE.



SATURDAY (6)

UNDOUBTEDLY the most in-demand band of the Camden week, Faces at the Roundhouse will be a rare British gig for a group that's now made the major league in a big way.

They haven't gigged in Britain since their mediocre Rainbow outings of

a couple of months back which, in turn, were some way removed from the previous appearance at the Oval.

The Roundhouse has been an excellent venue for the band in the past. Those who were there will tell you that their last Roundhouse gig, some 18 months ago just after the Stones played there, was a classic of its kind, as well

as a band milestone. Fond memories.

Since then, apart from Weeley, which really turned the tide for them, the band has been a little disappointing live. Maybe the lay offs between gigs have something to do with that, but, as Camden will find the band just returned from its eight day whistle stop tour of the States, they should have made the

necessary tightening up. Not to worry too much though. The Faces on an off night are still a revelation, specially if they bring along some of the fun and games from the American "Faces Circus" tour.

We might also get a sneak at some tracks from Rod Stewart's next solo album which the lad has been keeping under close-guarded wraps.

